

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (Currently Amended) A method for enhancing contrast in a digital projector, comprising:

positioning a first optical component and a second optical component along a light path, said first optical component and said second optical component being separated by a gap; **[[and]]**

sealing a perimeter of said gap with a sealant, said sealant being positioned around said light path; **and**

**evacuating said gap to provide substantially a vacuum in said gap.**

Claims 2-3: (Canceled).

4. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said first optical component is a digital micro-mirror device cover plate and said second optical component is a total internal reflection prism.

5. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said sealant is positioned substantially along a perimeter of at least one of said first and second optical components.

Claims 6-11: (Canceled).

12. (Currently Amended) A system for enhancing contrast in a digital projector, comprising:

a first optical component and a second optical component positioned along a light path and being separated by a gap; and

a sealant adapted to seal said gap substantially along a perimeter of said gap, said sealant being positioned around said light path;

**wherein said gap is evacuated to provide substantially a vacuum in said gap.**

Claims 13-14: (Canceled).

15. (Original) The system of claim 12, wherein said first optical component is a digital micro-mirror device cover plate and said second optical component is a total internal reflection prism.

16. (Original) The system of claim 12, wherein said sealant is positioned along a perimeter of at least one of said first and second optical components.

Claims 17-22: (Canceled).

23. (Currently Amended) A system for enhancing contrast in a digital projector, comprising:

a first optical component and a second optical component positioned along a light path and being separated by a gap; and

means for sealing said gap substantially along a perimeter of said gap, said means for sealing being positioned around said light path;

**wherein said gap is evacuated to provide substantially a vacuum in said gap.**

24. (Canceled).

25. (Currently Amended) A system for enhancing contrast in a digital projector, comprising:

a first optical component and a second optical component positioned along a light path and being separated by a gap; and

means for restricting airflow through said gap, said gap having ~~one of air and~~ a substantial vacuum therein.

26. (Canceled).

27. (Currently Amended) A digital projector, comprising:

at least two optical components positioned along a light path;

a gap formed between two of said optical components; and

a sealant adapted to seal said gap substantially along a perimeter of said gap,  
said sealant being positioned around said light path;

**wherein said gap is evacuated to provide substantially a vacuum in said gap.**

Claims 28-30: (Canceled).